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Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Lyttelton, George Lyttelton, 1st
Baron,

Observations on the life of
Cicero.





OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

L I F E

O F

C I C E R O.

[Hyttelton, George Hyttelton,
1752.]

Μετὰ μέντοι θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπων τὸ πᾶν γενέσθαι τὸ
αἰὲ ἐπιγιγνόμενον αἰδέσθαι δ' οὐδ' ἐν σκότῳ ὑμᾶς
οἱ θεοὶ ἀποκρύπτουσαι, ἀλλ' ἐμφανῆ πᾶσιν
ἀνάγκη αἰεὶ ζῆν τὰ ὑμέτερα ἔργα.

ΞΕΝΟΦΩΝ.

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25.11.53



To the Right Honourable

ARTHUR ONSLOW

Speaker of the

House of Commons.

S I R,



*HE Honour I do
my self of addres-
sing these Remarks
to You, is a Proof how Con-
fident I am in the Partiality
of your Friendship ; if they
have any other Claim to your
Regard,*

DEDICATION.

Regard, it is only from a Spirit of Liberty, which, where-ever it appears, is always sure of your Favour and Protection. The Subject of them, which is the Life of Cicero, must be doubly Interesting to you, as he was the most excellent Orator of all Antiquity, and bore the most eminent Character in the Roman Senate, while it remain'd Free, and was worthy of that Name.

I am

DEDICATION.

*I am with the most
perfect Respect, and highest
Sense of your Favours to
me,*

S I R,

Your most oblig'd,

and most obedient

humble Servant,



OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

Life of *Cicero*.



AMONG all the celebrated Characters in the *Roman History*, there are none more worthy our attention, than those Great Men who were at the Head of the Republick when she was arrived at her highest Degree of Power and Glory, and by a natural consequence of excessive Prosperity was fallen into those Vi-

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ces and Corruptions, which soon after produced a Change of Government, and brought her into an infamous Slavery. This Revolution was either hasten'd or delay'd according as they who had the Management of Affairs were more or less infected with the general Depravity: Some there were who preserved themselves quite untainted; who gallantly stood in the Breach, and struggled hard for Liberty: Such were *Marcus Cato*, *Quintus Hortensius*, *Quintus Catus*, and *Marcus Brutus*, whose Virtues were the more valuable to their Country, because they were exerted at a juncture when she found herself most in need of their Assistance: With these *Cicero* has generally been placed, and if we may take his own word, *Rome* had not a more unspotted Patriot to boast of than himself: But I doubt when we look strictly into his Conduct, we shall often find it very different from theirs who really deserve that Name; and it will appear even from the Testimony

mony of his own Letters, in which he spoke more naturally and with less vanity than he does in his Orations, that his publick Character was far from being Perfect; that he acted upon many occasions more like an ambitious Orator than a philosophical Republican; that his Virtues were blended with many Weaknesses and pernicious Failings; and that notwithstanding his exalted Notions of Integrity, he sometimes yielded to the Corruption of the Age, and sacrificed the Welfare of his Country to his private Interests and Passions. What makes him the less excusable is, that none ever understood the Rules of Virtue or saw the Beauty of it more than he: His Writings are the noblest Lessons of publick Honesty, Disinterestedness, and the Love of Liberty, that are to be found in all Antiquity: and it is the Excellent and almost Divine Spirit which appears in those Books, that has made the majority of Readers conclude the Author of them to have been in his

own Practice, what he takes so much
pains to recommend, and inculcates
with such force of Eloquence. And to
do him Right, in many parts of his Ad-
ministration he was the Patriot he de-
scribes: the Commonwealth had great
 Obligations to him; no less than its Pre-
 servation at one Crisis; but there wanted
a Steadiness and Uniformity in his Con-
duct which alone could entitle him to
the Reputation he was so desirous of
obtaining, and that has been given him
rather by the Partiality of learned Men,
than from the Suffrage of historical Ju-
stice.

I shall endeavour in the following
 Observations to set his Actions in their
 proper Light, and without aggravating
 or soft'ning any thing, consider them
 as they were directed to the Advantage
 or Prejudice of his Country; in doing
 which, I shall dwell only upon such
 Circumstances as are important to his
 Character, passing by a great number
 of other Facts which have no relation
 to my Design.

The

The first Cause of Moment that he undertook was the Defence of *Roscius Amerinus*, in which he gain'd great Honour by his opposition to *Sylla* who was the Prosecutor, and whose Power had frighten'd every body else from appearing in his behalf: Such a Spirit in a young Man at his first entrance into Publick Business was admir'd by all the World, and seem'd to promise something very extraordinary: But though the Danger of offending the Tyrant could not deter him from pleading for *Roscius*, yet he thought it not prudent to expose himself to his Resentment afterwards; but left *Rome* and retir'd into *Greece* under pretence of travelling for his Health. He there apply'd himself to the Study of Eloquence, and having the Advantage of the best Masters in the World, he made such Improvements in it, that when he came to the Bar upon his return to *Rome*, he soon eclipsed all his Competitors, even *Hortensius* himself, who could not see without uneasi-

uneasiness the Superiority he was gaining over him, though they afterwards became very good Friends ; The Conformity of their Sentiments upon Publick Business, and the Interests of the Commonwealth having united them notwithstanding their Emulation. This great Ability in Speaking could not fail to raise him very high in a Government where every thing was disposed of by the Favour of the People; and for the first Proof of their good Will towards him, he was sent to *Sicily* in the Office of Quæstor, where he behaved himself with so much Justice, Integrity, and Moderation, that his Reputation as a Magistrate was not inferior to that which he had obtain'd before as an Orator. To ingratiate himself still further with the *Sicilians*, he engaged in the Prosecution of *Verres*, who during his Prætorship in their Island, had drawn upon himself an universal Hatred by his Rapaciousness, Insolence, and other Crimes which were too often committed with Impunity

nity by the *Roman* Governours : And *Verres* himself, infamous as he was, did not want the Countenance and Protection of some of the most considerable Men in *Rome*, who endeavour'd to shelter him from Justice for a Reason obvious enough, because they were unwilling any Enquiry should be made into Offences of that publick Nature, in the Guilt of which so many of their Friends, and perhaps they themselves were too much involved. But the Eloquence and Credit of *Cicero* condemn'd *Verres* in spite of their opposition, and the *Sicilians* were so pleas'd with the Service he had done them upon that occasion, that they put themselves wholly under his Protection, and continued their Esteem and Affection to the End of his Life.

Soon after his success in this Affair, which recommended him extreamly to the *Roman* People, who were always glad to see Magistrates prosecuted for Male-administration, he was made *Edile*; and

and having gone through that Office with a deserv'd Applause, he was unanimously chosen Prætor. As that Dignity was the Second in the Commonwealth, the Possession of it inspir'd him with higher Thoughts and more aspiring Hopes than he had entertain'd before : He then began to take such Measures as he judg'd most likely to contribute to his Advancement : and as *Pompey* was more capable than any body of assisting him in that Design, he sought all means of gaining him to his Interests; and with that view pronounc'd his famous Oration *pro Lege Manilia*, in which he entirely forsook ~~his former Character of a~~ Lover of his Country, and became a principal Instrument of Illegal and Arbitrary Power. As the Part that *Cicero* acted in this Affair deserves a very particular consideration, I shall set it in as full a Light as possible, the more, because *Plutarch* takes no notice of it, which it is not very easy to account for considering his usual Impartiality.

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The extravagant Affection of the People in committing to *Pompey* the Command of the War against the Pirates, had vested him with so exorbitant a Power, that it utterly destroy'd the Equality essential to a Commonwealth. His Commission gave him an absolute Authority over the whole length of the *Mediterranean* as far as *Hercules's Pillars*, and along all the Coasts of it to the Distance of fifty Miles from the Sea: He was impower'd to take what Money he thought fit out of the publick Treasury without accounting for it, and to raise as many Soldiers and Mariners as he judg'd convenient. Besides this, he had a Liberty of chusing out of the Body of the Senate, fifteen Persons to serve him as Lieutenants, to whom he assign'd their Provinces at his own discretion. In vain did the Consuls, with most of the Senators, oppose this prodigious Authority, so contrary to the Maxims of their Government: Their resistance serv'd only to inflame the People, and occasion'd

them to add to their Decree, that *Pompey* should have Power to fit out five hundred Sail of Ships, to raise an Army of an hundred and twenty six thousand Men, and that he should have twenty four Senators and two *Quæstors* to obey his Orders.

With this Force he soon reduced the Pirates, and his Victory was hardly known at *Rome*, when *Manilius*, one of the Tribunes of the People, to gratify his insatiable Ambition, proposed the giving him the Government of *Lucullus* and the Command of that General's Army then carrying on the War with *Mithridates*, and that he should still retain the whole Extent of that Authority which had been granted him by the former Decree, though the Reasons for which it had been given were entirely ceas'd. This was nothing less than delivering to him all the Forces both by Sea and Land, and making him absolute Master of the *Roman* Empire: What render'd the Favourers of this Decree
more

more inexcusable was, That they had not the least Pretence of Publick Necessity to justify the Proposing it, as they seem'd to have had in the Commission they gave him against the Pirates, who were at that time very formidable Enemies: But *Lucullus* who Commanded in *Asia*, had overcome *Mithridates* in several Battles, and was as capable of finishing the War as He whom they appointed to be his Successor. Such an excessive Power entrusted to one Man, where there was so little occasion for it, appear'd to the Senate an utter Subversion of the Constitution; but such was their Fear of *Pompey*, whose Greatness was become no less terrible than that of *Sylla*, that except *Quintus Catulus* and *Hortensius* none durst contradict the Passing of it. These two Great Men, one of which was beyond dispute the second Orator in *Rome*, spoke with much Warmth and Force against the Decree, endeavouring to persuade the People of the Unreasonableness and Danger of it; and perhaps

they would have made some impression, if *Pompey's* Faction apprehending the Effect their Orations might have produced, had not set up an Abler Speaker than either of them to harangue on their side of the Question. *Cicero* mounted the *Rostrum*, and with an Eloquence worthy of a better Cause, most artfully reflected on *Lucullus*, whose Reputation as well as his Authority, was to be made a Sacrifice to the Envy of *Pompey*; then he proceeded to descant upon *Pompey's* Character which he set off with all the Ornaments of Rhetorick, attributing to him the whole Success not only of the *African*, *Spanish*, and *Piratick* Wars, but even of that against the *Slaves*, the Honour of which was solely due to *Crassus*. Thus by cruelly injuring two of the greatest Generals that were then in the Commonwealth; by a most servile Flattery of the Man who was manifestly overturning all its Liberties; He brought the People to consent to the *Manilian Law*, which, had a regard to the Interest

terest of his Country been his constant Principle, he ought to have opposed as violently as he did afterwards the *Agrarian*, or any other Attempt against the Safety and Freedom of the State. It is certain that these extraordinary Honours confer'd on *Pompey*, as they broke the Ballance of the Republick, so they irritated the Ambition of *Cæsar*, and afterwards furnish'd him with a Pretence of demanding as great a Power for himself, and seizing it by Force when it was refused.

I come now to speak of his Consulship, which really deserves all the Praises that not only the *Greek* and *Roman* Historians have bestowed upon it, but even those which he himself is so lavish of whenever he has an opportunity to mention it. His opposition to the Law propos'd by *Rullus*, which was presented to the People in a Form they were always easy to be caught with, was a Matter of the most delicate Nature, and nothing less than his consummate Address in the

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managing those Assemblies, could possibly have hindered its being carried by the artful Contrivers of it : But by shewing the People that under the Notion of a popular Decree they were really setting up a private Tyranny, from which no Advantage could arise to the Poor, for whose sake alone this Law was pretended to be form'd, but the Revenues of the Publick would be dissipated and its Liberty destroy'd ; he stop'd the execution of their Designs, and sav'd the Commonwealth from the Yoke which was just ready to be impos'd upon it. I believe no Affair was ever managed with greater Prudence, nor ever so much Skill exerted in any Oration as in those he made upon this occasion, which are certainly Master-pieces in their kind, tho' others of a more pompous Stile are generally more admir'd. His Conduct in *Catiline's* Conspiracy is too well known to be repeated here : The Vigilance, Firmness, and Activity, with which he discover'd and prevented that Design,

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can never be too much extoll'd ; nor could any thing have depreciated the Services he then did his Country, but his being so sensible of them himself. As to the Charge brought against him by his Enemies of having violated the *Porcian Law*, by putting to death the Chief of the Conspirators without allowing them a Tryal, he was abundantly justified in so doing by the urgent Necessity of Affairs, and by the Order of the Senate, *That he should take care the Republick might receive no detriment.* This Commission vested him with something like a Dictatorial Power, and the extream Danger of the Commonwealth requir'd it ; for the least Delay would have been fatal. But as the People were always jealous of any Stretch of Authority in the Senate, they were more easily wrought upon to take Umbrage at this extraordinary Act which *Cicero* himself calls in one of his Letters *Invidiosa Potentia.* — After the expiration of his Consulship all Mens Eyes were
turn'd

turn'd upon him, as one who they hoped would continue to be the chief Support of those that were affectionate to the Commonwealth. What Engagements he then enter'd into, what Friendship he cultivated, what Policy he observed, demands a very strict Examination, though this Period of his Life, from the Death of *Cataline* to his Banishment by *Clodius*, has been pass'd lightly over by Historians; and therefore many parts of it are only to be collected from his private Letters, in which he gives a very particular Account of every Step he took, and of the many Changes both in his Sentiments and Behaviour that happen'd during that remarkable Interval. We shall find him sometimes devoted to Pompey, sometimes at variance with him; sometimes imploring his Protection, sometimes despising his Power; now resolved to stand or fall with the Commonwealth, now making his Terms with its Tyrants; almost always Reasoning differently, and
yet

yet frequently Reasoning better than he could prevail upon himself to act. When he was to make an Oration to the People upon quitting the Consulship, the secret Enemies of his Administration declared themselves, and *Cæsar* who was one of the Prætors, together with *Metullus* and *Bestia*, two Tribunes, would not suffer him to give an Account of his Conduct as was always usual, but commanded him to abjure his Office, and leave the *Rostrum*. This they grounded upon his having put to Death some *Roman* Citizens without a legal Tryal ; and they thought it would be a great Mortification to *Cicero's* Vanity, to deprive him of so fair an opportunity of making his own Panegyrick : But the Readiness of his Wit found a Way to disappoint their Malice ; for he took the Oath in a new-invented Form, and instead of swearing that he had acted nothing contrary to the Interests of the Republick, he swore that he had saved the City and the whole State from Ruin. As extraordinary

nary as this Oath was, all the People took it after him in the same Words, and the Affront that his Enemies would have done him fell entirely upon themselves. The next Day he complain'd of them in the Senate, and prevail'd upon that Order to pass a Decree, *That no Prosecution should be brought against him for what he had executed by virtue of the Power which they had given him.* This drove the Cabal against him to propose a Law for the calling home *Pompey* with the Army under his command, to secure the Liberties of the People against the pretended Tyranny of *Cicero*: but by the invincible opposition of *Cato* this Project fail'd. However, it made such an Impression upon the Mind of *Cicero*, that he resolv'd to neglect no Methods of binding *Pompey* more strongly to his Interests, who had already very great Obligations to him, as has been shewn before. Accordingly when that General was preparing to return to *Rome*, he writ to him, and having complain'd of his

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his want of Friendship, in not congratulating him upon what he had done during his absence for the Service of the State; he compares *Pompey* to the younger *Scipio*, and himself to *Lelius*, desiring that their Union might be as strict as was the famous One between those two great Men. This produc'd an Appearance of Amity towards him, but he himself suspected it not to be sincere, as is evident from his 13th Epistle to *Atticus*, in which he says of *Pompey*, That indeed he made great Professions of Esteem and Consideration for him, and affected openly to support and praise him; but it was easy enough to see he envied him, though he endeavoured to conceal it. *Cicero's Vanity* makes him call that Envy, which was really Ill-will, for *Pompey* could not be a Friend to any body that had declared himself in the Interests of the Republick. The Character that *Cicero* gives of him in the same Letter, is very different from that of *Scipio*, to whom he had compared

him a little before: His Words are, speaking of his Conduct, *Nihil Comestum, nihil Simplex, nihil ἐπιτοῖς πολυτροποῖς Honestum, nihil Illustre, nihil Forte, nihil Liberum.* And again in the 20th of the same Book, *Is vir nihil habet Amplum, nihil Excelsum, nihil non Summissum & Populare.* Would one believe, that the Hero of the fine Oration *pro Lege Manilia*, and the *Pompey* thus describ'd, was the same Man? Had he nothing Great? nothing Elevated? nothing but what was Mean and Vulgar? was there neither Dignity, nor Spirit, nor Freedom, nor Candour, nor Honesty, nor Good-nature in his whole Behaviour? But to this Person, such as he is here represented, *Cicero* earnestly labour'd to recommend himself: and he had soon after more need than ever of his Protection in the famous Quarrel with *Clodius*, which he entered into more to satisfy the ill Humour of his Wife *Terentia*, who was jealous of an Intrigue between him and *Clodia*, than out of any regard to
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the Ceremonies of the *Bona Dea*. Had he known the Parts and Capacity of *Clodius* as well as he did afterwards when he came to feel them, in all probability he would not have expos'd himself to the Enmity of a Man so able to do him mischief, and with whom he had always lived before in a Degree of Friendship : But besides that he thought his Ruin infallible from the Evidence he brought against him, the perpetual Riot and Debauchery in which he pass'd his time, made him apprehend no great Consequences from his Resentment : But he was soon convinc'd, that a Turn to Pleasure does not always render those that follow it unfit for Business, especially when they are excited to Action by any violent Passion. *Clodius* found means to corrupt his Judges, and was no sooner acquitted but he turn'd all his Thoughts to the Pursuit of his Revenge upon *Cicero*, and kept him in continual Alarms till he got an opportunity of compassing it, which oblig'd him to court

Pompey

Pompey more and more, though such a Conduct was extremely inconsistent with his Principles of Liberty. As much distrust as he had express'd of that Great Man's Friendship in the Letter to *Atticus* I mention'd first, he now deceived himself into an entire Dependance on it, and most of his Letters were fill'd with Boasts of his good Policy in securing such a powerful Protector against *Clodius* and all his Faction. How little Foundation he had for so much Confidence, will appear by the Sequel of that Affair. In the mean time there was a Business brought before the Senate which, as it very much affected one of the main Points of *Cicero's* Policy, it will be necessary to give some Account of. It had always been his favourite System, through the whole Course of his Administration, to strengthen the Power of the Senate by a close Union with the Equestrian Order, they making a very considerable Body, and carrying a great Weight along with them

to which-ever side they inclin'd. He succeeded so well in this Design, that during the Conspiracy of *Catiline* they were a constant Guard to the Senate, and ready upon all occasions to support the Resolutions of that House. This was certainly a very important Service to the Commonwealth, and it was no small Honour to *Cicero* to have been the Author of it: But most of this Order being imploy'd in collecting the * Taxes of the Republick, or in Farming of its Revenues, there were grievous Complaints made against them from all Parts of the Empire for the frequent Abuses of their Office, in all which *Cicero* was forc'd to defend them contrary to Truth and Equity, for fear of alienating them from the Senate. But soon after the Affair of *Clodius*, *Cato* who did not understand those Managements, accused the Judges who absolved him of Corruption, many of which were *Roman* Knights, and obtain'd a

* Ep. 1. L. 2.

Decree against them. This was resented as an Affront upon the whole Body, and *Cicero* to pacify them again, was oblig'd to speak in the Senate against the Decree. * But a much worse Matter that follow'd shortly after, involv'd him in a new Trouble upon their Account. Many of them who had farm'd the *Asian* Revenues of the Censor, whose Office it was to sett them, had taken them at too high a Price out of Emulation to go beyond the other Bidders; and afterwards repenting of their Bargain, made a most impudent Request to the Senate, that they might be discharged of so much of their Rents as they thought would burthen them too much. It was impossible for *Cato* to be patient under such a Demand: He oppos'd it with all his Might, and on the other side *Cicero*, who knew of what Consequence it was not to disoblige the Order, supported them no less vigorously: The Dispute between them

* Ep. 1. L. 2.

lasted a good while, but at length *Cato* who had Justice and Reason entirely on his Side, got the better, and the Petition was rejected. Experience soon shew'd how much more useful it would have been for the Commonwealth to have follow'd *Cicero's* Advice. The Knights exasperated at the Severity of the Senate, abandon'd their Party, and gave themselves up to *Cæsar*, who knew very well how to turn this Division to his own Advantage. It was the Fault of *Cato* not to see that Publick Affairs are incapable of Perfection, and that it is impossible to govern a State without submitting Lesser Interests to Greater: Hence it was that with admirable Intentions for the Service of his Country, he sometimes did a great deal of Mischief, for want of distinguishing between what was good in Speculation, and what in Practice. This was seldom the Case with *Cicero*: when he departed from the Interests of the Republick, it was for

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the most part with his Eyes open, and without the Excuse of Error. During these Wrangles between him and *Cato*, the Triumvirate was secretly forming, and *Cæsar*, under the specious Pretence of reconciling *Pompey* and *Crassius*, was working himself into a Share of Power with them which he knew better than they did how to support. *Cicero* perceiv'd it, and takes notice to * *Atticus* of his growing Greatness. But as dangerous as this Union was to the Commonwealth, he did not think fit to oppose it, or break with *Pompey* upon that account; though he makes the strongest Declarations of his Resolution not to abandon the good Cause, but ever to maintain it at all Events. It seems he flatter'd himself with an unaccountable Chimæra of being able to govern them both, as he tells *Atticus* in the first Epistle of the second Book. And again in the third of the same Book, he informs his Friend that

* Ep. 1. Lib. 2.

Cæsar had assured him he would do nothing but by his advice: Possibly Cæsar being sensible of his Foible, might have sooth'd his Vanity in making him believe so; but it is much more likely, that his Conduct was owing to other Motives which are mention'd in that Letter, *viz. Reditus in gratiam cum Inimicis, Pax cum Multitudine, Senectutis otium.* Thus he manifestly gave up the Care of the Commonwealth to a precarious Safety and shameful Ease, but he could not help reproaching himself for it at the end of the Letter, and acknowledging that this was acting very differently from the virtuous Maxims of his Consulship, and very much beneath his Reputation.

The fifth Letter of the second Book is so extraordinary a Confession of his Weakness, not to give it a worse Name, that I am surprized how it came to drop from him even to so intimate a Friend as *Atticus*. He very

ingenuously tells him, That if they whom he afterwards calls Tyrants, would have bribed him with the Place of Augur, they had it in their Power to have gain'd him. *Quo quidem uno (Auguratu sci.) ego ab Istis capi possum ; vide Levitatem meam.* But being disappointed in the Object of his Ambition, he resolves, out of the abundance of his Virtue, to retire from Business and Philosophize : accordingly he went into the Country, and in the Letters he wrote from thence, treats both *Clodius* and *Pompey* with great Contempt, and even threatens the last with a publick Recantation of all the fine Things he had said of him. While he was absent *Pompey* married *Cæsar's* Daughter, upon which *Cicero*, whose Penetration saw all the Consequences of this fatal Alliance, return'd to *Rome*, and joining with *Curio* and other Opposers of *Cæsar* in the Senate, endeavour'd to obstruct his Designs, though without offending *Pompey*, with
whom

whom he still kept up a Shew of Friendship. But the Storm which had hung over him so long, now broke upon his Head : *Cæsar* to be reveng'd assisted *Clodius*, and got him to be chosen Tribune of the People. No sooner was he entred upon this Office, but he openly menaced *Cicero* with a Prosecution for the Death of the Conspirators. This threw him into one of his usual Terrors ; but *Pompey* flatter'd him with repeated Assurances that he would not suffer *Clodius* to proceed : At first he gave Credit to these Promises, but finding that the Design against him still went on, he began to suspect that he was betray'd. His Affairs were in this disagreeable Posture, when *Cæsar*, who desired only to draw him off from giving him Trouble at *Rome*, offer'd to carry him his Lieutenant into *Gaul*, for which Province he was ready to set out. *Plutarch* says he solicited it himself, but the Letters to *Atticus* expressly

pressly affirm that the Proposal came
 from *Cæsar*. Be it how it will, there
 could nothing more advantagious have
 happen'd to *Cicero* at that time: The
 Employment was very honourable, and
 would have effectually secur'd him
 from the Malice and Power of his
 Enemies: Being sensible of this him-
 self, he was inclined to accept of it,
 and would have gone with *Cæsar*, if
Clodius perceiving that he was in dan-
 ger of losing his Revenge, had not ve-
 ry artfully changed his Conduct, and
 by affecting to seem moderate and
 void of Rancour, perswaded People that
 he had laid aside his Resentment, and
 was even disposed to a Reconciliation
 if sought for. *Cicero* was weak enough
 to be duped by this Behaviour, and
 refused the Lieutenantcy of *Cæsar*, who
 thereupon insisted with *Pompey* upon
 giving him up to the Fury of *Clodius*,
 and declared in an Assembly of the
 People, that he thought *Cicero* had
 acted illegally in putting to Death the
 Accom-

Accomplices of *Cataline*. *Clodius* push'd the Affair so vigorously, that *Cicero* soon found he had undone himself in not making use of *Cæsar's* offer. He fell into a most unmanly Dejection, changing his Robe, and walking about the Streets in a fordid Habit, to move the Compassion of the People, while *Clodius* insulted and reviled him for his want of Spirit. The Senate indeed, and the whole Equestrian Order, gave him all the Marks he could desire of Affection and Concern, but the Faction against him was the stronger: *Crassus* was his Enemy upon many Accounts, *Catulus* was dead, *Lucullus* retired from Business, and *Cato* by the Artifice of *Clodius* removed from Rome: *Pompey* was his only resource, and he still counted upon some return for the many Services he had done him in the course of his Administration. But it is the just Punishment of those who make themselves the Tools of other Men's Ambition, That when-

ever

ever the Interests of those they serve may happen to demand it, they are sure to be sacrificed : for no very ambitious Man was ever Grateful any further than it was Useful to him to be so. This Cicero most cruelly experienced, when going to Pompey to implore his Protection, he to avoid his Importunities or Reproaches, refused to see him. Upon this, he utterly lost all hopes, and abandoning himself to the most abject Complaints, consulted with his Friends what he should do to avoid the present Danger. Most of them advised him to go voluntarily into Banishment, as the only Means to prevent a Civil War, which Council he resolved to follow, as most conformable to his own Genius and Circumstances.

In how Spiritless and Effeminate a manner he behaved during his Exile, is sufficiently known to all the World : The Stain that is left upon his Character was too great to be varnished over by all the Glory of his Triumphant

phant Return, which he chiefly owed to the Imprudence of *Clodius* in quarrelling with *Pompey*, though the vigorous Proceeding of his Friend *Milo*, and the Firmness of the Senate were of no small Service to him. As soon as he was re-established in his former Dignities, he link'd himself more closely than ever in Friendship with *Pompey*, making his Court to *Cæsar* at the same time, whom he found it was not safe for him to offend. This Complaisance had the Effect that he propos'd from it; he obtain'd the Place of Augur which he desired so passionately, and not long after the Government of *Cilicia*. His Behaviour in the Administration of this Province would have done him a great deal of Honour, if he could have been content with the Reputation he had acquired of a wise and upright Magistrate, without aiming at the Glory of a Soldier, to which he was far from having so good a Title. *Cato's*

answer to the Letter, in which he sollicitis him to get a Triumph decreed him by the Senate, is a very handsome Reproof of his Vanity, and a more gentle One than one would have expected from the Roughness of that great Man's Character. But notwithstanding all the Pains he took to soften his denial, *Cicero* was grievously offended at it; which ill disposition of his, the Enemies of *Cato*, particularly * *Cæsar*, omitted no Endeavours to confirm. Upon his return to *Rome* he found the Civil War just ready to break out between *Him* and *Pompey*: This extreamly embarrass'd him, for he was very desirous to be upon good Terms with both, and both equally courted him to their Party. At first he attempted to bring them to some Agreement, but he soon found that Design impracticable; for Ambition which had formerly made them Friends, now made them Enemies:

Then he labour'd to dissuade *Pompey* in particular from hazarding a War, by representing to him the inequality of their Forces, and that it was now too late to quarrel with the Man whom he himself had made so strong: These Arguments, as just and reasonable as they were, had no effect upon *Pompey*, who was infatuated with a vain Conceit of his own Power, and a false Confidence which betray'd him to his Ruin. All his Efforts towards preventing a Rupture meeting with no Success, *Cicero* found himself in the greatest Perplexities for which of the two Factions he should declare. On one side he saw a General without Authority, Troops without Obedience, neglect of all necessary Preparation, and a continual Series of Mistakes; on the other an active Leader, a well disciplin'd Army, great Courage, and admirable Conduct: whichever got the better, the Commonwealth was almost equally sure of

being enslav'd. That this was the case very plainly appears from many Passages in his Epistles to *Atticus*, where he says, That let the Success of the Civil War be what it would, the Consequence of it would certainly be a Tyrant. I shall only cite one which is in the 7th Letter of the 7th Book, *Depugna, inquis, potius quam Servias: ut quid? si victus eris proscribere, si viceris, tamen Servias.* The only difference was, That the Tyranny of *Pompey* would be established upon the Authority of the Senate, and *Cæsar* chose rather to build his upon the Favour of the People. Under these Difficulties *Cicero* remained some time, in a most uneasy situation; at last he tells *Atticus* the Conclusion of all his Reasonings in the following Words: * *Quid ergo inquis acturus es? Idem quod Pecudes quæ Depulsæ sui Generis sequuntur Greges: Ut Bos Armenta, sic ego Bonos Viros, aut eos qui dicuntur Boni, sequar, etiam*

* L. 7. E. 7.

ſi Ruent. He reſolves to Herd with his own Kind, that is to follow thoſe who had the Reputation of being the Honelt Party, the Majority of Senators, and the Men whoſe Dignity was moſt eminent in the Commonwealth. But though he had taken this Reſolution, he delay'd a good while to execute it, from the natural Timidity of his Temper. In the mean time, ſome of his Friends that were in *Cæſar's* Army and *Cæſar* himſelf, were very earneſt with him to ſtand Neuter at leaſt, if he would not join with them, which Conduct they perſuaded him would be moſt for his Honour, as well as infinitely for his Advantage. But *Pompey* preſs'd him to come immediately to his Camp, and in ſuch a manner as let him ſee, that he reſented the Uncertainty of his Behaviour. This alarm'd him, and he begun to think it neceſſary to declare himſelf according to his firſt Intention, though he every Day ſaw more reaſon to apprehend the ill Succeſs of
their

their Party. But what determin'd him at last was the Severity with which *Pompey* threaten'd to proceed against all who remain'd Unactive and Neuters in the Quarrel: * *Crudeliter minabitur Otiosis*, says he in a Letter to one of his Friends. And in another to *Atticus* he tells him, That the least he (*Atticus*) would suffer if *Pompey* should be victorious, was a Confiscation of all his Fortune; and that as many as continued in the same Neutrality must expect to come off no better. He himself therefore upon the Report of some disadvantage *Cæsar* lay under in *Spain* (which contrary to the Expectation of his Enemies he soon surmounted) set sail and joined *Pompey* at his Camp in *Greece*, who receiv'd him coldly, as knowing he came thither very much against his Will. He endeavour'd to revenge himself by bitter Railleries upon the ill-

* Ad Familiares, L. 9. E. v. ad Varronem.
E. vi. L. 11.

management of their Affairs, and so derided the Weakness of the Party, that it drew from *Pompey* this severe Reproof, *Pass into Cæsar's Camp, and then you will give over Ridiculing us and begin to Fear us.* *Cicero* so far follow'd his Advice, that he withdrew himself before the Battle of *Pharsalia*, and immediately after that decisive Action made his Peace with the Conqueror. From that time to the Death of *Cæsar*, he led a most inglorious and dishonourable Life, courting the Usurper whom in his Heart he hated, with the most abject and servile Adulations, entirely forgetting the Dignity of his former Character, and not even hiding the disgraceful Circumstances of his present situation by a prudent and modest Retreat, but exposing them to the Eyes of the Publick, and braving the Censures of Mankind. Yet in this unworthy and contemptible Scene of Action, which brought such a Cloud upon his Reputation, one Merit he still prefer-

preserved, that in his Flatteries to *Cæsar* he shew'd a Regard to the Interests of his Friends, and the Safety of those who had faithfully served the Commonwealth. Such a Conduct shews there were yet some Sparks of Virtue remaining in him ; and though it does not atone for the mean Homage which he paid to the Tyrant of his Country, yet it certainly lessens the Guilt and takes off from the Infamy of his Crime. The Conspiracy against *Cæsar* which was form'd and executed without his Participation, is a plain Proof how low he was then fall'n in the Opinion of honest Men ; for who was so fit to have engaged in a Design against the Life of an Usurper, as the Destroyer of *Catiline* and his Accomplices ? from whom could the Republick so properly expect her Freedom, as from Him who had before defended it in so imminent a Danger ? But They who espous'd that Cause which he had deserted, saw and knew that
 he

he had no longer Spirit enough for so great an Undertaking ; and therefore they contented themselves with requiring his Approbation afterwards, which they were satisfied he would not refuse them when the Blow was struck ; and then, indeed, as they expected he would do, he return'd to the Maxims of his former Policy, and his Character in some measure recover'd its former Lustre. He entred into the Interests of the Conspirators, and did them all the Service he was able, the particular Instances of, which it will not be necessary to mention here. But when he found that all was going again to Wreck by the Cabals of *Antony* and other Friends of *Cæsar*, when *Brutus* and the other Heads of the Conspiracy were oblig'd to yield to the Violence of the Conjunction and abandon *Italy*, he too judg'd it prudent to retire, and took Shipping to go into *Greece* ; but meeting with contrary Winds, he was driven back once

or twice to shore; by which delay, time was given to his Friends in *Rome* to acquaint him with *Antony's* having made a Decree, for the perpetual Abolishment of the Dictatorship, which *Sylla* and *Cæsar* had made so odious, and some other popular Acts, that gave them hopes he would return to his Duty, and no longer hinder the Restoration of the Commonwealth. Being thus call'd back by, what he terms himself, the general Voice of his Country, and looking upon the Accidents which had delay'd his Passage as miraculous Declarations of the Will of Providence to command his Return, he made what haste he could to *Rome*, where he was received by the whole City with uncommon Honours. But the good Opinion he had conceived of *Antony* did not last long: Some harsh Words he spoke in the Senate concerning him, occasion'd a very sharp Reply, which *Antony* resenting, loudly threaten'd him in his Oration, and accus'd

cus'd him as an Accomplice of *Cæsar's* Murder. *Cicero* from that Moment kept no Measures with him, but arming himself with all the Thunder of his Eloquence, pour'd forth those terrible Invectives which compell'd the Senate to declare War upon *Antony*, and soon after drove him out of *Italy*. This was certainly a very great Action, and one of the shining Parts of *Cicero's* Life; but possibly he would have done the State more Service in the situation it then was, if his Animosity against *Antony* had been less Violent, because it precipitated the execution of those Designs which ended in the Ruin of the Commonwealth; at least this was the Opinion of *Brutus*, as appears by several Passages in his Letters. But there is another Part of his Conduct which it will be more difficult to know how to justify, I mean his committing the Safety of the Republick to an ambitious Boy, who from the near Relation he bore to *Cæsar*, could never

be a proper Person to defend it in conjunction with his Father's Murderers. At first indeed it might look like good Policy, to make use of his Credit among the Friends and Soldiers of *Julius Cæsar*, against the more formidable Greatness of *Mark Antony*; but when he afterwards grew so Powerful, it was a most inconsiderate and fatal Mistake to continue him any longer in Employment, and put the last Stake of Liberty into the Hands of one who had so great Temptations to Betray it. It seems *Octavius*, unexperienc'd as he was, had discover'd the Old Man's weak Side, and by flattering and persuading him that he would always act subservient to his Authority, had engag'd him to that excessive Confidence which his Friends saw the Danger of though he did not. *Brutus* in particular, whose Eyes were ever open to all that might affect the Commonwealth, made him strong and frequent Instances to have a Care of setting up one Tyrant

Tyrant while he was pulling down another : But when, without any regard to these Remonstrances, he carried his Servility so far as even to supplicate *Octavius* for the Lives of *Brutus* and the other Conspirators, That truly great and free-spirited *Roman* could not help venting his Indignation against him in * two Letters, one to *Atticus* and the other to *Cicero* himself, which are at the same time the noblest Monuments of the heroick Virtue of him that wrote them, and the most unanswerable Condemnations of that Conduct which gave occasion to them. And indeed he had too much Reason to say, That *Cicero* acted as if he was not so sollicitous about securing the Liberty of his Country, as to chuse a Master who would be favourable to himself. But what most of all exasperated *Brutus* was, That in the Excess of his Complaisance for *Octavius*, he had even reflected upon *Casca* whose

* Ep. 16, 17, ad Brutum.

Cause had been espoused by him with so much Warmth, and upon whose Action he had bestow'd such high Encomiums, while he had Freedom and Courage to speak his Mind. Of this *Brutus*, whose Reputation was strongly linkt to that of *Cæsar*, most grievously complains to *Atticus*, and tells him with a noble Contempt, That though he and his Associates, in the generous Design of delivering the whole World from Slavery, did not boast so much of the Ides of *March* as *Cicero* of the * *Nones of December*, yet their Glory was not inferior to his, nor their Characters less Sacred. I must transcribe both the Letters, if I were to repeat all the admirable Reproofs which they contain of *Cicero's* Baseness and Indiscretion in so meanly courting the Enemy of the Commonwealth, and for having planted and supported a Tyranny, whose Roots were like to strike deeper, and

* At which time *Cicero* quash'd the Conspiracy of *Catiline*.

grow more strongly, than that of *Antony*; which he valued himself upon having attempted to destroy. All that can be alledged in his Excuse is, That he believed he should be able to deprive *Octavius* of the Power he had given him, when the Interest of the State should require it: There are some Passages in the History of those Times, which seem to favour this Supposition, and even to assure us, That he intended doing it, when he was prevented by the sudden Forming of the Triumvirate. It is said that *Pansa*, who received a mortal Wound at the Battle of *Modena*, declared at his death, to the young *Cæsar*, That the Senate only made use of him as an Instrument of their Vengeance upon *Antony*, and that they were determined to make him the next Sacrifice to the Jealousy of the Republick. There was also an Expression of *Cicero* reported to him, in which by an Equivocation easily understood, there was intimated

estimated a * Design to cut 'him off as soon as he had served their Turn ; upon which, he openly declared that he would take care to put it out of their Power. If this was the Case, it very much takes off from the Ingratitude of *Octavius*, in consenting to the Death of his Benefactor, since such Double-Dealing could hardly deserve the Name of an Obligation, let the Effects of it be ever so advantageous. Upon the whole I am inclined to think, that though his Behaviour in regard to *Cæsar* was productive of infinite Mischiefs, yet he meant well in it to the Commonwealth, and that the Fault was rather of his Judgment than his Heart : But to whatever Cause it is to be ascribed, he suffer'd Death as a Punishment for it, and fell himself the earliest Victim to that Tyranny his Mismanagement had established. There was something mean in the Circum-

* *Laudandum Juvenem Ornandum Tollendum.*
V. *Epist. a D. Bruto Liber, xi. ad Familiares, E. 26.*

stances that immediately preceded his
 * Murder, but at the Instant of Death
 itself he behaved with Dignity, and
 shew'd a Firmness not unworthy of a
Roman.

In his private Character he was very amiable, only sometimes too much given to Raillery, a Fault which very witty Men are seldom wise enough to shun. I cannot pass so severe a Censure as some have done upon his Grief for the Death of his Daughter Tullia, whose extraordinary Merit is a sufficient Answer to those who reproach it with the Name of Weakness. Great Minds are most sensible of such Losses, and the Sentiments of Humanity and Affection are usually most tender, where in every other respect there is the greatest Strength of Reason.

I shall close these Observations with one Remark upon the Works of *Cicero*, that they are a strong Proof how essential Freedom is to the Excellency

* See Plutarch.

of Writing, particularly in the two most manly Kinds of it, Philosophy and Oratory; since after the Loss of the *Roman* Liberties, they were so far from ever being equall'd, that all Attempts which were made to imitate them, served only to demonstrate that the Genius and Learning of *Rome* were sunk together with its Constitution. Poetry indeed, and other Parts of Literature which are only proper for Amusement, may possibly flourish under the Smiles of an Arbitrary Prince; but Force and Solidity of Reasoning, or a Sublime and Commanding Eloquence are inconsistent with Slavish Restraint, or Timorous Dependency.





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